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THE NECESSITY & USE OF HERESIES,

Or

The Third and Last Part

OF THE

Great Question

About

INDIFFERENT THINGS

IN

Religious Worship,

CONTAINING

An Answer to the Objection against Liberty of Conscience, from the Growth and Spreading of Heresies.

By *Edward* Bagshaw, Student of Ch. Church.

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To the Honourable Sr JOHN VAUGHAN Knight of the *Bath*, Second Son to the Right Honourable, the Earl of *Carberry*.

Noble and Learned Sir,

HAd I had no other knowledge of your eminent Worth and Quality, but what was transmitted to me by common fame (which places you, and that deservedly in the first Rank of our most knowing and Religious Gentry) that alone would have sufficiently warranted me in this Addresse, since those who shine like you, in so vigorous and active a Sphere of constant and unblemished Piety, may easily excuse the careful Beholder, if he turn his body with some kind of particular Respect & Observance towards them. But when to this general Account, which claimes a Reverence from all, there is superadded an Intention you long have had, to

ſhew me ſome perſonal kindneſs (which you have lately performed, with very many Noble and Obliging Circumſtances) I could no longer be juſt, either to my own Reſentments of Gratitude, or to the Expectation of others, ſhould I not have taken the very firſt Opportunity of manifeſting to the world, how much I think you are to be honoured; and how fit to be propoſed as a Publick Pattern. For others of mean Endowments, and narrow Fortunes, to be well principled in vertue, or to take a little compaſs of Learning in their way to Preferment; this carries with it no ſingular commendation, for in ſuch, neceſſity may ſeem to make their choyce for them; but for one in the greateſt outward affluence, & in the midſt of the moſt charming Temptations, both from Honour & Pleaſure, to preſerve an unſpotted integrity, and to keep himſelf free and dis-intereſſed; for the purſuit only of what is truly Great and Noble; this is a degree of Excellence, which God vouchſafes to very few: And, Sir, you are one of thoſe, in whoſe manner of Life and Studies, we may read, that ſuch kind of rare examples are not wholly diſcontinued; but God ſhews he hath a Care of this Age alſo, how corrupt ſoever, in that he hath given you, as *Salt*, to ſeaſon it. But

But while others are taken up with admiring, what you ſet the loweſt value upon, your accurate Learning, and through Inſight into the profoundeſt depths of Philoſophy, together with a Maſculine and Clean Expreſſion, give me leave to take notice of that, which I have often in private Wondred at, your ſtrict and impartial ſearch into the myſteries of Chriſtian Religion, which, while others paſs lazily over, or take the belief of them upon truſt, you have made it your buſineſs ſeverely to examine; and thence have arrived to ſuch an height of Aſſurance, that you can look down upon thoſe Objections & Difficulties, wherewith puzling Diſputers do trouble both themſelves and others, with a fixed and ſteady eye, and only pity thoſe poor miſtaken *Rationaliſts*, who ſeek for ſatisfaction, where it is not to be had; like *Saul*, who conſulted with a *Witch*, when none but the Lord could truly anſwer him.

I cannot therefore wiſh an higher Elogy to this ſmall Treatiſe, then that it were as fit for your view, as you are able to judge of it; For you, Sir, are experimentally acquainted with the Truth it contains; and can demonſtrate from the moſt undoubted Teſtimony, that God hath a little number in the world,

whom,

whom in spite of *Hell* or *Heresies*, he is resolved to save; and therefore by state-Arts and Politick Contrivances, to labour the Prevention of *Heresies*, it is as to the *Elect*, a *needless*, as to *Reprobates* an *unprofitable care*, and *unwarrantable* to both; since, when the Scripture tels us, *there must be Heresies*; they only take the way to perpetuate them, who endeavour their suppression, by waies which that Word hath not warranted. As winds, till they are pent up & restrained from their motion, do seldom any hurt; so nor *Heresies* neither, till they are imposed and forced, they make no publick disturbance. The world would never have been *Arian* heretofore, nor *Antichristian* now, did not Princes lend their Power *to the Beast*, to make it kill, whom it cannot confute. That all mens Eyes may be opened to see that Christian Religion, which is the *Power of God*, needs not any Assistance from the undue *Power of man*, and that you, whose eies are already opened, may be long Preserved for the Information and Example of others, is, and shall be the constant Prayer of

Drury Lane,
Jan. 10, 1661.

NOBLE SIR,
Your truly Affectionate and most Obliged Servant,

Edward Bagshaw.

THE PREFACE.

AMong all the Arguments, which are made use of in defence of a rigorous and stated Uniformity, against the pretensions and Plea of Christian Liberty, there is none, that is either urged with greater vigour, or that, amongst unwary and superficial Hearers, carries with it a better appearance of probability, then this, that the Imposing of some few things, supposed to be Indifferent, is the only way to prevent the entrance, and to suppress the growth of Heresies. For as unruly Cattel are kept from straying, by being put into a Pound, or into some straight Enclosure, so, where there is a certain Form, and fixed Garb of Worship, unto which all are compelled to agree; there will in all probability, be no room left, for those secret undermin[illegible]gs, and clandestine Insinuations, by which, Errour, like undiscovered fire, is blown up and kindled, and spreads it self, to the ruine sometimes both of Church and State. And therefore as they tell us, that Conjurers, to keep their evil Spirits from doing mischief, do draw a Circle about them, and confine them to it; so, Magistrates, who are the State-Exorcists, have no better way to prevent the Designs of Factious and light spirited men, (who oftentimes cry up Religion, when they mean Rebellion) then to confine all, even Religious Meetings, unto such a Circle and Order, out of which, they may not be suffered to move, lest Conscience, which seems at first to start and

scruple

ſcruple at ſmall things, becomes at length, for want of due Bounds, a Patronage and Plea for the greateſt and moſt irregular Exorbitancies.

That I may take nothing from the ſtrength of this Argument (which may be yet farther improved by conſideration of the great Scandal *given in our own time) I will confeſs, that were a State, which profeſſeth to embrace* Chriſtian Religion, *not ſolely to be guided according to the Rules of that, but left at random, to be governed by thoſe* Prudential Motives, *and* Political Maximes, *which the* Wiſdom of this World *(that the Apoſtle cals* earthly, ſenſual and deviliſh *is moſt ready to invent and to faſten upon; there ſeems nothing, at firſt Bluſh, to be ſo contrary to* Reaſon of State, *as a* Toleration *of two or more Religions, or the leaſt variation in the* Mode *and* Form *of* Publick Worſhip; *ſince this Diverſity, may eaſily be preſumed to beget Diſſentions and Quarrels, which ariſing at firſt in private Families, like wind that lies concealed in ſecret Caverns, at laſt breaks out into an Earthquake, and, like a mighty Tempeſt, overturnes and bears down all before it.*

It is, I believe, upon ſome ſuch fallacious and ill weighed Inducement, as this I mention, that there hath been a kind of Conſpiracy, amongſt all worldly wiſe *and* ſuper-political *men, againſt the ſincere, ſpiritual and unmixed Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ever ſince the death and murder of him, from whom it received both its Name and Doctrine. For we read, that Chriſt ſuffered as a* Diſturber *of that ſtate, which he came to ſave; and as a* Blaſphemous Heretick, *in that Church, which he came to teach.* Paul, *and the reſt of the Apoſtles met with the very ſame entertainment, both for Language and Uſage; and afterwards, for 300 years together, all kind of violence was practiſed againſt the* Chriſtians, *as* State-Incendiaries, *and men that were obſtinate*

only

only in Impious and Seditious Errours. But our Religion lost more by Peace, *then by that bloudy and outragious* Warfare; *all the while the Ship of the* True Church *rode out at Sea, the Storms it met with, did only toss but could not overwhelm it; In a* Calm, *it began to sink, and never was near perishing, till it came to Harbour. In short, the Professed Favourers of* Christianity, *did, by their well-meant, but ill managed kindness, more destroy the* Church, *then all its open and most furious Enemies. For when* Constantine *and his Successors, mistaking quite the Nature of our Religion, did labour to accommodate and attemper it unto their* Civil Interest, *straight the old Heathenish Spirit of* Idolatry and Persecution, *did revive, under new Names; and* Hereticks, *i. e. Dissenters from the established Forms then, were as severely handled, as* Christians *themselves before. Which course was so long continued, until* Policy *and* Pomp *had quite devoured and eaten out the* Purity *and* Plainness *of Religion, and made it nothing else but a Property, for ambitious* Church-men (*who in all Ages, have been the greatest Cryers up of, because the only Gainers by, a* Specious Uniformity, *of which they are the sole Managers*) *to make Attempts upon the* Civil Power; *which at last, they wrested out of the Emperours hands, and in token of their entire Conquest, they deposed not* Princes *only, but* Scripture *&* Reason, *& the* Spirit *of God himself too from their Authority; and set up a* Political Head *of their own, unto whose pretended* infallible *Dictates they enforced all to yield an* absolute, *because* blind *and* ignorant *Obedience. Thus, under colour of suppressing* Heresies, *the world consented to enslave themselves unto the most* damnable, *destructive and fatal* Heresie, *that ever the Sun saw, I mean, to* Popery; *which, by a strange kind of Figure, would pass for the only* Christian Religion, *when as it hath in it just no-*

thing of the Spirit, Purity, Knowledge, *or* Liberty *that* Christ *eſtabliſhed. In which ſad condition the greateſt part of the Chriſtian world yet lies, and groans, for the ſpeedy Coming of its* Redeemer.

This having been the ſucceſs and iſſue of Uniformity, *and this being its natural Tendency, I wiſh all ſerious and diſpaſſionate Chriſtians would conſider, that, though* Hereſies *are to be bewailed, and ſo far as we lawfully can, ſuppreſſed too, yet we muſt do* Bonum bene. *We muſt not remedy an Inconvenience, with bringing in a Miſchief; nor deviſe expedients of a ſtrict and violent* Uniformity, *which as God in his Word hath no where warranted, ſo, we may find by the ſucceſs of it among the* Papiſts *and others, that he hath not bleſſed. Since by this means, quite contrary to Gods Command, many Millions of Soules are forced to ſit down under a wretched and irreparable Ignorance; their over-careful Guides, for fear it ſeems, leſt they ſhould loſe their way to Heaven, having with a great deal of Caution, taken their Candle from them.*

How unfit I am to be, ſo much as inſtrumental, in pulling off the Vaile *from before mens eyes, I deſire to be alwaies ſenſible: yet having already ventured upon this Controverſie, I have here once more tried to rectifie mens miſtakes, & laboured to take away the ſtrength of that objection againſt due* Chriſtian Liberty, *from the many Hereſies, which thereby are occaſioned. In this ſhort Treatiſe therefore, I have endeavoured to manifeſt, that,* in the Church of Chriſt, there muſt be Hereſies. *And while we obſerve that diligence and care in our ſelves, together with that equity and moderation towards others, which our Religion doth require from us, it is as impoſſible to avoid* Diverſity of Opinions (*which among angry men, will certainly enough be nick-named* Hereſies) *as it would be to place our ſelves in the midſt*

of

of Sun-ſhine, and not ſee Variety of Colours. Mens Judgments, eſpecially if they give themſelves any Latitude of Enquiry, are as various as their Complexions; ſo that to preſcribe one certain Form to all, and thereby to force men to act outwardly, what inwardly they do not aſſent to, is like Painting the Face with an infectious and Venomous Juice, or giving a Nauſeous Potion unto a Nice and Dainty Palat, whereby we ſhall offend God, as much as men; who at the laſt day, will not thank any, for other mens conſtrained, involuntary, and therefore falſe and hypocritical *Devotion.*

Having ſaid thus much, I now take my leave of this controverſie; not as if I thought, that more could not be written, but becauſe I am no longer in a free capacity to do it: Since I cannot write now in ſo unconcerned a manner as I did before. For having lately been deprived of my juſt Right, in a Freehold I had at Ch. Church, *for no reaſon at all, that I know of, unleſs for the impartial and unbyaſſed Diſcovery of my Judgment about* Indifferent, *or rather* Doubtful Things in Religious Worſhip: *It will but wrong the cauſe, ſhould I proſecute it any further; ſince it may be interpreted now, that I write like a* Party; *and that, not Conſcience, but Diſcontent doth excite me to it. Unleſs therefore I am called out to defend what I have already written, I ſhall for the future forbear; and manifeſt by my carriage, that though for the preſent, I cannot* ſubmit, *yet, I thank God, I can* ſuffer *in ſilence.*

Drury Lane.
Jan. 10. 1661.

EDWARD BAGSHAW.

THE NECESSITY and USE OF HERESIES.

1 Cor. 11. 19. *For there must also be Heresies among you,* &c.

THese are the Words of the Apostle *Paul*, and urged by him as a Reason, why he did believe the Report he had heard concerning their *Schismes* and *Contentions*; For as we find, *Chap.* 1. He tels them, that he was informed by some who were related to the Family of *Chloe* (who seems to have been a Woman of Quality and Repute in that Church of *Corinth*) that there were *Contentions among them*: Each Party endeavouring to cry up those Teachers by whom they were first converted, or most profited, to the Prejudice and Disgrace of the rest: Whereupon, one said, he was of Verse 11. Verse 12.

Paul; *i. e.* a Disciple of *Paul*; another was for *Peter*; a third sort for *Apollos*; whereby they did not so much bandy against one another, as oppose the Honour of the Lord *Christ*; who, by these Ministers, as his Instruments, did work their Salvation. And therefore for them, to have such fierce and vehement Contentions, about those who were meerly subordinate, and could do nothing but as the Power of *Christ* did co-operate with them, argued these *Corinthians*, notwithstanding their *Gifts*, to be very raw, childish, and carnal Christians: As the Apostle concludes,

V. 4, 7. *Chap.* 3. *For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are not ye carnal? i. e.* Are ye not led by very weak and childish Inclinations, to make such a Note of Difference among your selves, because of your Teachers?) *For who is Paul? and who is Apollos, but Ministers, by whom (i. e.* by whose Ministry, and Preaching) *ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (i. e.* according to that ability which God was pleased to distribute to each of his Ministers) to him therefore the sole Honour is due, and not to be factiously ascribed to any of his Servants; as the Apostle further argues, *I have planted, i. e.* laid amongst you the Foundation of Christian Faith; *Apollos hath watered, i. e.* by

Acts 18. 25. his Eloquence (for we read that he was λόγιος ἀνὴρ, *i. e. a well spoken man*) *Apollos* hath added a Verdure and Freshness to my Doctrine, and made it spring up amongst you: *But*, saith he, *God gave the increase, i. e.* made it fruitful and effectual. From whence it followes, that *neither he that planteth is any thing, i. e.* to be esteemed, and solely gloried in; *nor he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase.*

Having thus convinced them of their Folly, as well as sin, in making *Schismes* upon such ill-grounded pretences; he proceeds in this Chapter, to take notice of a great Disorder, which they committed even at the time of the Sacrament; for there, when they should have acted in the highest Love and Condescention towards each other, yet then they brought their Contentions and Animosities along with them, and made the *Publick Assembly*, (for so I understand the Word ἐκκλησία, since the Christians as yet had no publick Places of Resort, but met, as they could, in Private Houses) witnesses of their unchristian Discord. *When ye come together in the Church*, saith he, *i. e.* as I understand it, *in the Publick Assembly, I hear that there be Divisions among you*: and though

though it might ſeem a thing almoſt impoſſible, at that time, when you come to receive the *Lords Supper*, and in that Place, when all the Faithful are met together, there ſhould be any ſo bold Defyers of Chriſtian *Charity* and *Order*, as then and there, to vent their Diſcontents, and manifeſt an ambitious Strife; *yet*, ſaith he, *I partly believe it*; *For there muſt alſo be Hereſies amongſt you*, &c. And therefore I do not much wonder if you begin ſo early in *Schiſm* and *Separation*.

The words contain Two Parts. 1. A Prediction. *There muſt be Hereſies.* 2. One Reaſon or Ground of it. That οἱ δόκιμοι, *i. e. thoſe that are approved and ſincere, may be made manifeſt.*

The Poſition or Doctrine that I intend to inſiſt on, is, That *in the Church of Chriſt, there is an unavoidable neceſſity of hereſies.* As our Saviour ſaith of *Offences*, Ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστι μὴ ἐλθεῖν, *i. e. It is unchangeable*, or, *it cannot happen but they muſt come*. So ſay I of *Hereſies*, ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστι, It is impoſſible to avoid it, but they will come. *Doct.* Luke 17. 1.

To clear up this, I ſhall explain theſe two things. 1. What is meant by *Hereſies*. 2. What are the Grounds or Reaſons, why in the Church of Chriſt, they are ſo fatally neceſſary.

For the Firſt, *viz.* What is *Hereſie*? Some hold it is impoſſible to be defined, amongſt whom was *Auſtin*. Others define it to be *Sententia humano ſenſu electa, Scripturæ Sacræ contraria, palam edocta, & pertinaciter defenſa*, i. e. *An Opinion choſen by a mans own Underſtanding, contrary to the holy Scriptures, openly taught, and obſtinately defended.* Which is the Definition of *Groſthead*, the Learned Biſhop of *Lincolne*, who for his ſingular Zeal in oppoſing the Popes Uſurpations in *England*, was ſtiled, *Romanorum Malleus & Contemptor*. With this Definition, becauſe of the Learning and Vertue of its Author, I ſhould acquieſce, but that all who have got long poſſeſſion of any Tenet, charge Diſſenters with the name of *Hereticks*; and every one, who maintains any ſingular Opinion, doth endeavour to back it with Authority of Scripture. And therefore without attending to Concluſions of others, the beſt way to underſtand aright the nature and meaning of *Hereſie*, will be to have recourſe our ſelves unto the Scripture, from whence alone we had the firſt Notice of ſuch a thing; I mean, as it is a thing criminal and damnable. *Mat. Pariſ. p. 874.*

In the Scripture I find the word αἵρεσις to be *vox media ſignifi-*

cationis, and to ſignifie any *Opinion* indifferently, whether *good* or
Acts 15. 17. *bad*. Thus we read of the *hereſie of the Sadduces*; and the *hereſie*
of the Phariſees. And *Paul* mentions it of himſelf, by way of ho-
Acts 15. 5. nour: according to the *moſt exact or accurate hereſie or Opinion of*
Acts 26. 5. *our Religion, I lived a Phariſee*. But for the moſt part, the word
αἵρεσις is taken in an ill ſenſe, to ſignifie, an *Opinion repugnant to*
the ſenſe of Scripture, and likewiſe deſtructive of the Civil Peace.
Thus when *Tertullus* would blaſt the Repute of Chriſtian Religi-
on before *Felix*, the Roman Deputy, he cals it an *hereſie*: *We have*,
Acts 24. 5. ſaith he, ſpeaking in behalf of the *Jews* againſt *Paul*, *found this*
man λοιμὸν, *a very Peſt, and one that moveth* στάσιν, *Sedition*, or *up-*
roar amongſt the Jews, throughout the world; *and a chief Leader of*
the Sect or *Hereſie of the Nazarenes*: So doth he in contempt call
the *Chriſtians*, as being the followers of *Jeſus of Nazareth*, which
was a Name of Diſgrace and Obloquy among them. As *Paul* te-
Acts 26. 9. ſtifies of himſelf, whilſt he was yet an Unbeliever; δόξα ἐμαυτῷ,
I thought with my ſelf, that I ought to do many things againſt the
Name of Jeſus of Nazareth. In this ſenſe is the word *Hereſies* to
Gal. 5. 20, 21. be underſtood, when by the Apoſtle they are reckoned among
Works of the Fleſh, and they are joyned with *Strife, Seditions, Wrath,*
Envyings, which are the uſual Attendants of *Hereſie*. Now be-
cauſe *Works of the fleſh* are of two ſorts, either ſuch as flow from
the *fleſhly Underſtanding* (as the Apoſtle cals corrupt Reaſon, Νοῦς
σαρκὸς, the *Underſtanding of the Fleſh*) or ſuch as flow from the
Col. 2. 18. *fleſhly Will*; accordingly there are two ſorts of *hereſies* mentioned
and ſpoken againſt in Scripture. 1. Such as upon Preſumptions
of *natural Reaſon*, do contradict expreſs and clear Revelation of
Scripture. Thus the Apoſtle *Peter* cals the *denying our Lord Chriſt*,
2 Pet. 2. 1. *i. e.* either his Nature, as the *Socinians* of our times; or his *Offices*,
as all the *Papiſts do*, a *damnable Hereſie*. *There ſhall*, ſaith he, *be*
falſe Teachers among you, who παρεισάξουσι, *ſhall covertly*, (or *over and*
above, or *contrary to the Truth*) *bring in deſtructive hereſies, even*
denying the Lord that bought them. So the Opinion of thoſe, who
under pretence of *Humility*, brought in the *Worſhip of Angels*,
into the Church of *Coloſſe*, was a Formal *hereſie*, ſince the Authors
of it, had no warrant of Scripture to add ſuch kind of *Party Medi-*
Col. 2. 18. *ators* to Chriſt, but as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *were raſhly puffed up by*
their fleſhly mind. Thus the *denying of the Reſurrection of the Body*,
by ſome in the Church of *Corinth*, was a great *Hereſie*, as over-
throwing

throwing the Foundation of a Chriſtians hope, and opening a door to all manner of Impiety and Villany; *For if the dead riſe not*, the Conſequence is very natural and reaſonable, *let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die* 2. There are another ſort of Hereſies ſpoken againſt in Scripture, which flow from the *fleſhly will*, and have an immediate tendency to patronize and encourage diſſoluteneſs of Life, ſuch was the Hereſie of the *Nicolaitans*, who held, that it was lawful to *eat things offered to Idols, i. e.* to commit Idolatry, in times of Perſecution; and to *commit Fornication*, which our Saviour ſpeaks ſharply againſt in the *Revelations*, calling it the *Doctrine of Balaam*, and expreſſeth his utter diſlike of ſuch Tenets, in theſe words, *which I hate*. So the Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks againſt ſome vicious *Heretick* (as ſome think, the *Gnoſticks*) who, under pretence of advancing *Chriſtian Liberty*, gave themſelves up to all manner of Impurity; *promiſing*, ſaith he, *Liberty, they themſelves are the Servants of Corruption*. *Jude* carries on the ſame mens *hereſie* further, and ſaith, they did not only, *defile the fleſh*, but by ſtretching the Notion of *Liberty*, beyond its due Bounds, did ſet at nought *Government, and revile Dignities, i. e.* undervalue, diſeſteem, and diſobey their Civil Governours. Which kind of Hereſies, as they are more dangerous, ſo they are more damnable then others; becauſe there can be no pretence of Conſcience to juſtifie them. From what I have ſaid concerning *Hereſies*, as I find them recorded in Scripture, I draw this general Definition of them all. An *Hereſie is ſuch an Opinion, as either hath no Foundation in Scripture*, (as the *Worſhip of Angels*, among the *Coloſſians*) or, *expreſly contradicts it* (as *the denial of the Reſurrection*, among the *Corinthians*) or, *Miſtakes and miſſe-interprets it, to countenance diſſoluteneſs of Life, and diſobedience unto the Civil Magiſtrate*.

1 Cor. 15. 12.

Verſe 32.

Apoc. 3, 14, 15.

2 Pet. 2.

Verſe 19.

Jude v 8.

The neceſſity that there ſhould be ſuch *hereſies* in the Church of Chriſt, will appear, from the conſideration, 1. Of the *Cauſes*. 2. Of the *Occaſions*, which concur to the producing of them.

1. The Neceſſity of *Hereſies* will appear from the conſideration of their Cauſes, and they are theſe three. 1. *God permitting*. 2. *Satan exciting*. 3. *Man begetting and ingendring of them*.

1 Cauſe.

1. The firſt Cauſe of *Hereſies*, which makes the being of them *neceſſary*, is, *Gods permiſſion of them*. Where, by *Permiſſion*, I do not mean, an idle, unconcerned, ineffectual letting them paſſe only

only, and barely ſuffering them to be; but Gods wiſe, powerful, and mighty ordering of them, as he did the *hardneſs of Pharaohs heart*, for very gracious and holy ends, eſpecially theſe two.

1. *For the Trial of the Godly*: As the Apoſtle hath it, that the *Nazars, the ſincere and ſingle-hearted Chriſtians*, might, by this means, appear the more eminent and conſpicuous. As it did ſhew the Power of God, to preſerve the *Buſh* (by which his people of *Iſrael* was repreſented) *in the midſt of the Fire*; ſo doth his Power equally appear, when his Truth is born witneſs to, in the midſt of the Triumph and Efficacy of Errour. Were there but one Opinion which paſſed for currant among Chriſtians, there would not appear any thing extraordinary in the owning of it; but when there are ſo many Parties, each crying up their own way, as the *Epheſians* did their *Diana*, there to keep touch with the *things of God*, and, in ſpight of all contradiction, openly to avow and countenance them, this ſhews a well-principled Integrity; a temper that God is ſingularly delighted with. In the world, God lets his Heaven be oftentimes wrapped up in clouds, that the ſtars which he hath appointed for the Government of the Night, may appear more bright and uſeful: So in the *Church*, which is Gods Heaven on Earth, the moſt viſible Manſion of the Divine Nature, he lets Darkneſs break forth, and thick Vapours; that thoſe Saints of his, whom he cals *Lights of the world*, may ſhine with the greater Luſtre, and redouble their Beams, from the greatneſs of the Oppoſition made againſt them. We muſt not think that God hath either given us *Faith* or *Knowledge*, which are his choiceſt Largeſſes, but he intends to try the conſtancy of the one, and the ſeriouſneſs of the other: And ſince the greater Difficulties we encounter, ſtill the more Honour redounds to God, who is our General; therefore he will ſeem to hazard his Truth, by letting it, to outward appearance, be loſt as it were, in the midſt of a ſwarm of *Hereſies*, that by raiſing up ſome *Heroick Champions*, he may recover it again with greater advantage. Thus in the firſt ages of the Church, *Peter* reſcued Freedom of Communion with the Gentiles; *Paul* aſſerts Freedom from the *Yoke* of needleſs and inſignificant Ceremonies; and *John* defended the Eternal Divinity of our Saviour, againſt the Narrow-ſpirited, Tyrannical, and Helliſh Impoſtures of the Hereticks in their Times: And in all ages, many there are recorded to us of great

Vid. Deut. 13. 1, 3.

eſteem

esteem and credit in the Church of Christ, whose Memories, in all probability, had not survived their Bodies, had not they signalized themselves by their zealous asserting of Truth, when it was almost swallowed up by the Deluge, or outfaced by the authority of Errour. And such Examples God will ever continue; for which Reason, he lets *Heresie*, like *Pharaoh* and his *Egyptians*, captivate his Truth, that he may send some *Moses* and *Aarons* for the Redemption and Deliverance of it.

2. The Second, and no less principal end, as to the Design of God, why he permits *Heresies*, is, that *Reprobates may have occasions presented them of stumbling and taking Offence.* When a wicked man turns from that *Righteousness* he once pretended to, God saies, *I lay a stumbling block before him*; and upon the wicked, the *Psalmist* saies, *God raines Snares*, *i. e.* scatters Traps and Snares in their way, that they may be taken. There are some men, who in Scripture are stiled, *the People of Gods curse*, *the Vessels of his wrath*, and by *Jude*, *Forewritten unto condemnation*: To whom Gods greatest methods of Goodness prove only means of hardning them, to sin more desperately; thus did Gods Word prove to the *Israelites*: *It was*, saith the Prophet, *Line upon Line*, *and Precept upon Precept*, *that they might go*, *and fall backward*, *and be broken*, *and snared*, *and taken*. And *Christ*, to the unbelieving *Jews*, became a *Stone of stumbling*, *and a Rock of Offence*, *unto which*, saith the Apostle *Peter*, *they were appointed*. So the Gospel, τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις *to lost*, and *perishing Wretches*, *is a Savour of death*. But what these things do only by accident, that *Heresies* do in their own proper nature, *i. e.* they harden Unbelievers, and make them more resolute in their opposing of the Truth. As when God did intend *Ahab* should go down to battel, and perish there, he let a *Lying Spirit of Prophesie* be in the mouth of all his Prophets; *For*, saith he, *thou shalt perswade him*, *and prevail also*. So when God sees a company of lazy, vicious men, who are weary of the Powerful shinenes of Truth, then he lets some *corrupt Doctrines* be scattered abroad, which may fit those Inclinations, they are already principled with: and likewise, when others have *curious itching Ears*, and *sound Doctrine* will not relish with them, then God suffers some lofty airy speculations to be broached, by study of which, they may grow drunk with Pride and Prejudice against more wholsom Tenets. It was this just Judgment of God upon mens willing-

Exek. 3.20.

Psal. 11.6.

Isa. 34.5. Rom. 9.21. Jude v.4.

Isa. 2.8, 13.

1 Pet. 2.8.

2 Cor. 2.15.

1 Kings 22.22.

2 Thes. 2.10, 12.

willingneſs to be deceived, that God gave them up to Antichriſtian, *i.e.* to *Papal* Deluſions. As the Apoſtle hath it, *Becauſe they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved. For this cauſe God ſhall ſend them* ἐνεργειαν, *the active power and efficacy of Errour, that they ſhould believe a lie*, *i.e.* a falſe and feigned doctrine. Mat. 18. *That they all may be damned who have not believed the Truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, *i.e.* in falſe and unrighteous Tenets. And therefore as our Saviour ſayes, *Wo to the world, becauſe of Offences*; ſo, *Wo to the world, becauſe of Hereſies*; becauſe as we ſet traps to catch Vermine, ſo God appoints theſe to enſnare arrogant and ſelf-preſuming, or vicious and ſelf-defiling men.

2 *Cauſe.* 2. The ſecond Cauſe which concurs to the producing of *Hereſies*, is *Satan exciting*. That *evil Spirit*, whom our Saviour cals, *the Prince of the world*, and the Apoſtle, *the ruler of the Darkneſs of the world*; out of that innate hatred he hath to Truth, by which his Kingdom is overthrown, ſcatters the ſeeds of Errour and ignorance, every where up and down the world: and as he ſet upon our Saviour with miſſe-quoted Scripture, in which he appeared ſo dexterous and ready, as if he intended to puzzle and non-plus his eternal wiſdom: So the moſt deadly and poyſonous *hereſies*, have by him, by a ſtrange kind of Chymiſtry, been extracted out of the ſame holy Scriptures. Thus he brought in the practiſe of needleſs rigour and auſterity of Life, under pretence of Col. 2. Chriſtian ſtrictneſs and ſeverity, in thoſe Precepts, *Touch not, taſt* 1 Tim. 4. *not, handle not*. Thus brought he in the Doctrine of *forbidding marriages*, under pretence of Chriſtian Chaſtity and Abſti- 2 Cor. 11. 3. nence, which the Apoſtle in expreſs words, cals the *Doctrine of Devils*. Thus he brought in *Superſtition*, *Will-worſhip*, and *idle Ceremonies*, under pretence of Chriſtian *Decency and Order*; thereby, as the Apoſtle complains, *the Serpent beguiling many through his* Rev. 13. *Subtilty, ſo that their minds were corrupted from the ſimplicity which was in Chriſt*. Thus laſtly, brought he in the cruel and incompaſſionate killing of men that would not *worſhip the Image of the Beaſt*, and in ſome outward and viſible manner acknowledge their conformity, under pretence of Chriſtian zeal and care of Truth. In ſhort, as the greateſt Cordials, if not rightly prepared, do prove the moſt deadly and killing Poyſons; ſo the moſt dangerous and deſtructive hereſies, have been compounded by *Satans* malice, out of the moſt Soveraign Drugs of Sacred Truth; but by him purpoſely ill mixed and tempered. And here I deſire to obſerve,

that

that though the Devil likewise doth stir up *Persecution*, as our Saviour felt in himself, when he said of his own Sufferings, that then was the *Power of darkness*, i. e. Hell was then broke loose, and wicked men in crucifying Christ, acted the Devils businesses; so he foretels to the Church of *Smyrna*, *Fear none of those things thou art to suffer; behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried.* Yet this is but Satans After-game; for his great design is, to eclipse the beauty of Truth, by the Mist of Errour: And if he finds, that his *Heretical Tares* will not take root, then under pretence of *Faction*, *Sedition*, and the like old charges, which were laid both against our Saviour, and his Apostles, he destroyes those careful Husbandmen, which would sow better Seed, and leave no room for the Devils Cockle. The Art and Policy of Hell, lies in the quiet spreading of *Heresie*, for this gains him souls, whereas violence never got him any thing, but the bodies of men; that is, it made them *obsequious Slaves*, but not *real Converts*. We find therefore in the *Revelation*, that when the Woman, under which the True Church is emblemed, *had brought forth, the Divel stood by, ready to devour her Child as soon as it was born*; and for some time, endeavoured to maintain his footing in Heaven, and till he was cast down from thence, did not think of *making war with her Seed*. The Moral of which Representation, I take to be this, That when Christian Truth begins to break forth, then the Devil for a time endeavours to destroy it, by disputing the case, and venturing his cause upon Argument; but when he finds himself mastered at that weapon, then he changes the *Subtilty of the Serpent*, into the *Roaring of the Lion*; and with open mouth devours his Opposers. But this way the Devil doth not ordinarily try, till his *False Doctrines* have been baffled and foyled, and he hath no *wisdom*, no *Wile*, no *craft* left, to countenance the grossenes of his Impostures.

Luke 22. 53.

Rev. 3. 10.

Rev. 12.

3. The third Cause concurring to the necessary Being of *heresies* in the Church, is, *Man himself, begetting and ingendring of them*. For as the most fruitful and pregnant Seed, if it be not cast into a warm and prepared Soyl, loseth all its Vertue, so those Seeds of Errour the Devil sowes, if the heart of man was not a fit soyl for them, would never rise up again in so large an harvest of absurd and impious Heresies. Were the winds never so fierce, yet if the water of the Sea were not of an unstable and moveable

Cause 3.

nature, there would never be any Tempest. So, how impetuous and violent soever the Gusts, and Breath of Satans Temptations be, yet if our nature were not of it self ductile, and pliant, the world had never been so prodigiously tossed up and down, nay, often overturned by erroneous Maximes. Now there are Two Principles in man, which are alwaies susceptible of any false and Heretical Impression; the one is, his *Ignorance* in spiritual matters, the other is, his *Pride* in Natural Knowledge. By his *Ignorance*, he is apt to mistake Errour for truth, and by his *Pride* he is apt to propagate it; that like *Simon Magus* (the first noted Heretick in the Church of Christ) he may appear *some body* in the eyes of a few partial Followers; and this is it, which makes his *Errour Heresie*. So that till we can find some Art to change the Nature of man, to make his *Understanding* more refined, sublime and spiritual; till we can purge the *Will* from prejudice, design and partiality; till we can alter the course of his *Affections*; and set them afloat another way, to love God, in stead of himself, and to prefer Truth before applause; till we can do this, we have as little hope to see the Church free from *Heresies*, as to have our Gardens clear from infectious Mists and Vapours, which have the Sun to exhale, the wind to convey, and a Bog hard by, to ingender them.

Acts 8.

But besides these *Causes*, which do absolutely necessitate the *Being* of *Heresies*. There are two other *Occasions*, which do mightily conduce, if I may so speak, to the *well-being* of them, *i.e.* to their easier growth and spreading. And they are, 1. *Scripture-difficulty*. 2. *Christian Liberty*.

1. The *Difficulty of Scripture* is a very great occasion for the increase of *Heresies*, because of that variety of Interpretation, which many places, especially in the Apostle *Pauls* Epistles, are capable of: Whose Writings, even in the Apostle *Peters* time, were liable to much misse-construction. For to omit, that the things themselves recorded by him, are *δυσνόητα*, *scarcely intelligible*, being full of mysterious and fathomless depths, they are written by that excellent Apostle, in a style so dissonant from all Rules of ordinary Grammar, that it requires great pains, meerly to find out his Literal Meaning. Which Industry, very few, who read him with prepossession and prejudice, have leisure for; and therefore hastily expound their own sense, without attending to his:

Occasion 1.

2 Pet. 3.

his: So that, as *Tertullian* observes, God seems to have ordered the Text of Scripture on purpose, that it might afford opportunity to *Heretical Glosses*. For as in the works of Providence, though the whole Frame and Systeme of the world be admirably well-composed, yet, if we consider them in parcels, we shall meet with many things, which will startle us into jealous, and misse-believing Thoughts. So is it in that compleat body of Divine Truth contained in Scripture, the whole Connexion and Series, as it relates to the *Messiah*, foretold in the Old, and fulfilled in the New Testament, together with those ravishing heights of Heavenly Directions for life, is most ineffably curious, and excellent: But if we take those things asunder, and consider them distinctly, by *Chapter* and *Verse*, we shall meet with *Mistakes in Chronology, Variations in Names, Diversity of Readings*, and some lesser seeming contradictions, which to a snarling and quarrelsom wit, are so many Bones, for him to spend his mouth upon, without minding more wholsom and digestible Food. And yet this makes very much for the plausible entrance of an *Heresie*, that it hath the Letter of Scripture to countenance it: The *Papist* will urge for his *Implicit Faith*, *Hear the Church*, without ever considering, that by the *Church* there, is not meant, what he fancies, a *Pope*, or *Cardinals*, or *Councils*, or *Fathers*, but a *Select Number of Christians*; which is the only sense wherein that word *Church* is taken throughout the whole New Testament, when it is used by our Saviour and his Apostles. So the *Socinian* shelters his impious denying of our Saviours Divine Nature, under that, which he finds our Saviour speaking, *The Father is greater than I*: not considering in what capacity our Saviour spake these words, *viz.* according to the Person he then took; or how many other places there are, wherein his equality with the Father is asserted. The *Arminian* wants not the same Plausibilities for his *Free will*: and in short, no Heresie that ever yet was in the Christian world, but pleaded Scripture for its defence and Patronage; which such strange Variety of Opinions could never have done, were not the Scripture exceeding difficult and hard to be understood, and thereby an occasion given for the Rise and Conceiving of them. *De Præscript. Hæretic.* Mat. 18. John 16.

2. The second Occasion of the large growth and spreading of Heresies, is *Christian Liberty*: Which in no Religion is allowed, *Occasion 2.*

nay commanded, in that Latitude as in ours. For we are enjoyned
1 Thes. 5 21. to *try all things*, and then, *to hold fast that which is good*: We are
1 John 4.1. bid, *to try the Spirits*, and though *an Angel should come from Hea-*
Gal. 1. 8. *ven*, and preach to us, we are not to believe him, if he teach a-
ny thing *contrary to this Gospel*. We are commanded to see with
our own eyes, and to chuse for our selves; without depending
Isa. 8. 20. any further upon the Authority of *Fathers* and *Doctors*, then as
they speak *according to this word*, which under the severest penal-
ties, we are obliged to study and peruse. For as God, in the old
Mal. 1. Testament, *would not have the blind for sacrifice*, so neither will he
John 4. in the New; and they had as good not worship him at all, who
like the *Samaritans*, worship him they know not why. And as
in point of *Judgment*, we are to be thus *free*; so likewise in point
1 Cor. 7. of Practise, as to Religious *Rites* and *Orders*, we are commanded,
Mat. 15. not to be *the servants of men*; not *to worship God by the Precepts of*
Gal. 5. 1. *men*; not *to be entangled with any yoke of Bondage*, but to *stand fast*
James 1. 1, 2. *in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*; Whereupon, our
Gospel is called the *Royal Law of Liberty*; and we are, *so to speak,*
and so to do, as those that shall be judged by that Law. Yea, further,
as we are to be thus free in our selves, so we are to be exceeding
charitable and tender towards others, bearing with our weak bre-
thren; and if they do but hold the *Foundation of Faith and good*
works, to tolerate the *Hay and Stubble*, which they may build up-
on it. And the reason of this is, because our Religion, as it
sprang from Heaven, so is it maintained from thence; as the
Spirit of God did first discover, so doth it still reveal it; and by
a new and almighty Birth, of dead and sinful men, make us Living
2 Cor. 3. 16. and sincere Christians: Now where *the Spirit of God is*, saith the
Apostle, *there is Liberty*, *i. e.* not only Freedom from Errour and
Ignorance, of which he there speaks, but from those wretched and
inhumane Acts of Force and Fraud, whereby other Political In-
ventions, rather then Religions, are continued and upheld in the
world: For where is all others *have the Light*, and will not en-
dure to have their Principles questioned, as is clear in that devil-
lish Cheat and *Mystery of Iniquity*, the *Papacy*: Our Religion
desires nothing more, then to be sifted to the bottom, that so it
may be chosen, for its own native Truth and Excellency, and not
for any outward Advantages, or to serve a State-turn, which
Christian Religion will never stoop to do. And whoever have

not

not after the most serious study and impartial Examination, arrived to an embracing of this *Faith*, must needs lose the Comfort, Satisfaction and Sweetness of it, because till a man hath met with, and in his own mind resolved all Objections that make against him, he cannot be certain that he is in the right, but must upon the rising of every doubt, be full of anxious fear and perplexity. This which I have said concerning the necessity of *Christian Liberty*, doth by accident prove a great means for the propagating of *Heresies*; for as where the Soyl is good, and the Ayr free and warm, Weeds will spring up as well as good Corn: So is it in the Church of Christ, since there is Liberty allowed for variety of Judgments, Errour must needs thrive and spread, as well as truth. Especially since we may not pull up the *Tares*, or by the hand of violence, stop the Progress of the most deceitful Errour; but if *sound Persuasion*, if *Demonstration of the Spirit and Scripture*, if *Rejecting of the Heretick*, and *forbearing of Communion with him*, will not prevail, to make him renounce his Errour, I am not yet convinced, that in Opinions concerning Matters meerly spiritual, our Religion doth allow any other more offensive weapons. So that since to that *Liberty*, which is given to the sowing of *Heresies*, there is added Impunity unto their growth and progress, it must needs follow, that the *Causes* I mentioned, do not more necessitate the Being of *Heresies*, then these *Occasions* will necessitate their Thriving and Continuance. Mat. 13.

1. The Inference from hence shall be to teach us, not to mistake the *Occasions of Heresie*, for the *Causes* of it. Among those who are exact and critical Writers of History, as *Polybius*, *Tacitus*, and others, we find, they distinguish carefully between the *Arse* and the *Arma*, the *Beginning*, and the *causes* of a War. The *Beginning* of a War may arise from something apparent and visible; whereas the *cause* of it may be more deeply laid, even concealed from the view of the Actors. So in this case, the *Occasions* indeed of *Heresie*, which do midwife it into the world, are *Scripture-difficulty*, and *christian Liberty*: Whereas the true *causes* are those I have mentioned; especially *Man himself*, whose Heart is the Womb, in which that evil Birth is formed. And therefore let us take heed that through hast and prejudice, we accuse not either the *Scriptures*, or *due Christian Freedom*, of those Errours, which meerly our own Ignorance, Presumption and Partia- *Use 1.*

Partiality do produce. To accuse the *Scripture* for our Heresies, is all one as if, because we meet with ill sents, we should blame the Sun, and not the Dunghil. So likewise, as to *Liberty of Conscience*, to charge that with the production of Errours, is all one, as if the Ayr without, rather then ill humours within us, should be thought the cause of our Diseases. Let wicked and light-spirited men then bear the blame of whatever Follies they hold; and not either the *Reading of Scripture* be disgraced, without which, there can be no Knowledge of Truth: nor *Liberty of Conscience* be debarred; without which, there can be no openness of Profession; both which are as necessary to Christian Faith, as the Sun and Ayr are to Natural Life, we cannot see without the one, nor breath without the other. Take away *Scripture*, and we are in this world as Mariners upon the Sea, without a Compass; who have nothing but the violence of waves, and the uncertain motion of the wind, to drive them. Deny *Liberty*, I mean, in things *Lawful*, then Christian Prudence, Charity, condescention, and wise doing, or forbearing of things indifferent, as we see occasion, lie all useless by us, and we labour to become more knowing then others, to no purpose.

Use 2. 2. Is it so necessary, that there must be *heresies*, then let us not take offence, or think ever a whit the worse of our Religion, for that great Variety of *Heresies* which have sprung up in our dayes. When the Apostle *Paul* was himself in trouble, he writes to the Church of *Thessalonica*, *That no man should be moved by these afflictions*; *for*, saith he, *your selves know, that we were appointed thereunto,* 1 Thes. 3, 3, 4. *for verily when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer Tribulation, even as it came to pass.* If they were to be comforted under their *Afflictions*, because he foretold them, we have the same reason to be comforted under our *Heresies*, since he foretold them too; and from thence hath afforded us an excellent Argument, to assert our Saviours Truth and Veracity, and in that, the Truth of our Religion, against all Opposers. This use the Primitive Writers made of them, when *Celsus* and others did object to the Christians, the great variety of Opinions, and diversity of Judgments amongst them, so that, say they, *Were we willing to turn Christians, we know not of what Party to be, since notwithstanding your Feuds and Quarrels, you all equally pretend to Christ.* To this, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, and the rest reply, *Haereses non*

non dolemus venisse, quia novimus esse praedictas. We are not at all ſorry that Hereſies are come, for we knew it was foretold they ſhould come. So that the very Argument, which the Heathens uſed to diſgrace Chriſtianity, was by thoſe wiſe and Learned men improved for the Illuſtration and confirming of it: And, indeed, ſince, as I have already demonſtrated, there cannot be a more rational Proof of the Divine Miſſion of any, then the *fulfilling of his Propheſies*, it is very admirable to conſider, how our Saviour hath left ſuch Predictions behind him; which were beyond any Humane Foreſight, and yet every Age hath been fulfilling ſome or other of them, ever ſince his time. That a Religion ſo harmleſs, and inoffenſive, ſhould be perſecuted: that notwithſtanding perſecution, it ſhould take root, and be preached throughout the world: That preſently after it was propagated, there ſhould be *Sects* and *Hereſies* formed out of it; and this to be the conſtant, un-erring Fate of our Religion, was a thing beyond all Rational and meerly humane Conjecture; and therefore the fulfilling of this great Prediction concerning *Hereſies*, ſhould make us with thankfulneſs look up to *Chriſt*, who hath already armed us againſt any Prejudice we may receive from them, ſince they are only diſcoveries of his Truth, and Trials of ours.

Demonſtration that Jeſus is the Chriſt.

But yet, Thirdly and Laſtly, Let no man think, that becauſe *Hereſies* are *neceſſary*, that therefore any ſhall be excuſed, who is the Author of them; Hereſies are no otherwiſe neceſſary, then *Scandals* and *Sins* are, of which, our Saviour ſaith, *δεῖ ἐλθεῖν, they muſt be*; *but yet*, ſaies he, *Wo be to that man by whom they come.* *Mark them*, ſaith the Apoſtle *Paul*, *which cauſe Diviſions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them.* And in another place, *αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον, The Sect-making man, after the firſt and ſecond Admonition, reject; knowing that ſuch a one is quite perverted, and ſins, being ſelf-condemned.* All which Places, with many other, making ſo directly againſt new-fangledneſs of Opinion, I cannot but wonder at the boldneſs of thoſe men, who are not content only to ſtart up new and needleſs Opinions, but to the diſhonour of our Religion, and their own Eternal Ruine, if they repent not, make thoſe Opinions the Grounds of *Separation* from all Church-Aſſemblies, but their own. Whoever doth thus ſet up for himſelf, muſt be able to demonſtrate theſe Three things. 1. That the Opinion he diſſents from,

uſe 3.

Matt. 18. Rom. 16. 17.

Tit. 3. ἐξεστραπται.

is

1. Be apparently false and damnable. 2. That the Opinion he himself holds, is certainly and infallibly true. 3. That it is absolutely unlawful for him to joyn in communion with another, who in that particular (as for instance, in *Infant-Baptism*) differs in Judgment from him. The two first of which Assertions, very few of our *Separate Churches* will be able to maintain, and I am sure, the last, none can. For if the Errour of another be not imposed upon my Practise, I ought not to withdraw my self from the Communion of any, who hold the Foundation of Christian Faith, namely, *Belief in Jesus being the Christ*; as is clear in the practise of these *Corinthians*, among whom, some denied the *Resurrection*, and yet were all present at the same Sacrament. This Doctrine, because it strikes at the Root of all Separation, which cannot be justified, but in case of indispensable necessity, *viz.* when such things are imposed upon us, as Conditions of Communion, which we cannot in Conscience submit to; for there if we depart, we do not go, but are driven out. But this deserves to be more largely handled; which I shall reserve for a particular Treatise.

FINIS.